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ABSTRACT

Franco-Americans constitute the fourth largest language minority group in the United States, with over two million Franco-Americans residing in the greater New England area. Largely due to lack of available information, teachers and administrators have often proceeded under the erroneous assumptions that Franco language and cultural patterns are essentially similar to mainland French language and culture. Consequently, to a large extent the educational and social needs of Franco children have not been met by the public school systems. In many cases, such treatment was due to ignorance of the Franco sociocultural context, but in other instances it was a result of discrimination and ridicule. On the other hand, examples of school systems where Franco children have benefited from bilingual education programs are also documented. This study also documents the extent of the preservation of French culture in New England. The pull between the maintenance of Franco traditional culture and values and the political realities of American life is felt perhaps most keenly by those of college age. Examples are given of attempts by sociopolitical organizations and action by Franco student groups at the university level and by a small cadre of Franco educators. (AMH)

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THE FUTURE PAST: THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF FRANCO-AMERICAN SCHOOLING IN NEW ENGLAND

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I. INTRODUCTION

New England's Franco-Americans have long gone unrecognized and unheralded as a people who have greatly enriched American culture. How many know, for example, that those of Franco-American heritage include Jack Kerouac, Grace Metalious, Frank Fontaine, Robert Goulet, Will Durant, Rudy Vallee, and General Curtis Lemay? How many have ever studied anything but "Parisian" French in secondary school foreign language classes? How many also know that almost since their arrival in America the Franco-Americans have been stigmatized as the "Chinese of the East", or, as John Gunther put it, "the most parochial and unassimilable of all racial groups"? (Gunther, 1975) How many even know the Francos exist as a distinct ethnic group in America?

Educators have had Francos in their public school classrooms throughout America for the past several decades. For the most part, these "invisible" students have been left on their own to cope and assimilate as best they could. A major purpose of this paper is to inform educators and others interested in the processes of American schooling of the historical background and cultural identity of the Franco-Americans, and to illuminate the educational experiences the Francos have had in America's public school systems. The concluding section will examine the question of the present struggle for Franco-American cultural and linguistic survival.

A. Historical Reasons for French-Canadian Emigration to the United States

The French are the fourth largest language minority group in the United States (1970 U.S Census). Within the six New England states, the Francophone population ranges from a low of 4.7% of the total in Connecticut to a high of 15.2% in New Hampshire (Table 49. General Social and Economic Characteristics,

Selected States). The term "Francophone", for purposes of the census, included four major categories: 1) Native-born from France and their descendants; 2) French-Canadians who had migrated as laborers or as farmers and their descendants; 3) Acadians (expelled from Nova Scotia in 1755 and dispersed to the east coast and to Louisiana) and their descendants; 4) Haitian immigrants.

Within New England, the French-Canadians and Acadians formed a recognizable and distinct ethnic group which came to be known as the "Franco-Americans" to outsiders (though within the population, distinctions are made between "les Francos", i.e., Canadians, and "les Acadiens", i.e., Acadians, and the Acadians often resist being labeled as "Francos").

Giguère provides a concise summary of the historical reasons impelling French migration to New England:

> The first to come were the Acadians who were deported by the English ("le grand dérangement") from their century-and-a-half-old homelands on the Bay of Fundy to the English colonies of North America...Other French Acadians, partisans of the American revolutionary cause, were given lands in Northern New York...In the first part of the 19th century, there were some political refugees from the anti-French "reign of terror" of an English governor (1807-11) and then later refugee leaders of the abortive revolution of 1837 in Canada, the Patriots. Both of these groups migrated to Vermont. But with these exceptions the migration to the United States was not directly the result of political pressures. In the 19th century the French-Canadians were caught in the classical Malthusian dilemma of too many people on too little fertile land...Furthermore, tracts of fertile land were held by the British and inaccessible to the French. All this combined with an ethic of high fertility created tremendous pressure on the French to migrate. The opportunities for work in New England drew a large proportion of those who did emigrate from Quebec. By 1850, migration to New England developed a permanent character rather than the seasonal character it had had before. Textile rather than lumbering and the brickyard became the major employment.
>
> During the Civil War, immigration slackened somewhat. However, some 20,000 to 40,000 French-Canadians were enlisted in the Northern Armies, many by means of bounties, some as paid substitutes for the U.S. draftees. After the Civil War a rapid development of markets for New England industries created employment opportunities that were lacking in Canada...In 1940, the United States census reported the number of French-Canadians born or of mixed parentage as 908,000...

> My estimate of the number of French-Canadian origin persons in the United States today is around six million. (Giguère, 1979).

Table 2 confirms that the type of settlements generally populated by the newly-arrived French-Canadian "habitants" were, in urban areas, sites of manufacturing, textile, shoe, and other labor-intensive manufacturing industries; and in rural areas, sites of logging operations, dairy, and potato farming.

B. Current Demographic Data

The most recent census data presently available for the Franco-Americans dates from 1970. This data has been extensively analyzed by a Franco sociologist (Giguère, 1979); however, severe flaws in this data have precluded an accurate assessment of the actual number of persons of French-Canadian/Acadian descendance. The major problem identified as confounding the data is that the pertinent census question was phrased as "What language, other than English, was usually spoken in this person's home when he was a child?" Many Franco-Americans of the third, fourth, and even fifth generation grew up in homes where French was no longer regularly spoken as the primary language in the home, and thus they would not have answered "French" to this question. Those not responding "French" were not counted as French, and thus their data are not available through the 1970 census (Quintal, 1980). The end result is a serious undercounting of the Franco-American population.

The 1980 census data, when analyzed, will not be comparable to the 1970 data, for the questions have been changed. The 1980 census asks what other languages besides English are spoken in the home, how well English is spoken in the home, and the ethnic group of origin the respondent belongs to (Table 8). Again, these questions are seen as providing for an inaccurate count of Franco-Americans: third, fourth, and fifth generations may speak only English at home,

and thus not identify "French" as a second language; and Franco-Americans do not identify themselves with the "French" (perceived as being those from mainland France) in a single, homogeneous ethnic group. Although a serious underestimation of the Franco-American population is likely, no data are presently available. Dr. Giguère's detailed analyses of the 1980 census data are expected to be completed in 1984.

The lack of valid, reliable, and accurate data concerning the Franco-Americans continues to hamper serious scholarly research studies. In addition, the Franco-Americans themselves are harmed becuase major funding allocations for social and educational programs are generally based on the census figures. Such programs as educational assistance under ESEA Titles VII and IX, and ESAA Title VII, as well as social assistance for mental health programs, depend heavily on documented counts of eligible populations. Despite Franco efforts, official government documents and questionnaires continue to fail to include questions designed to properly identify the Franco-Americans.

II. FRANCO-AMERICAN LINGUISTIC HERITAGE

A. The Development of "Joual"

The Franco-Americans have inextricably been linked with the French language as an integral part of their identity. From the earliest days of immigration, the "habitant" was exhorted that "the loss of language means the loss of faith, and the loss of faith means the loss of Heaven." Until recent times, the Franco and his French language were thus indivisible.

The question arises as to what is meant by "Franco-American French." Historically many of the earliest settlers came to New France (i.e., Quebec) from the Brittany and Normandy regions of mainland France. After the Treaty of

Paris in 1763, social and intellectual commerce between Quebec and France greatly diminished, leaving 18th century France as the reigning "standard" language. The Quebec clergy, however, did their best to renew the French used in their sermons and in their schools by keeping up with linguistic developments occurring in France. They published corrective vocabulary lists and linguistic studies on Canadian French usage (Woolfson, 1979).

This movement to maintain and upgrade the status of Canadian French continued through the 20th century. In 1960, Frère Untel (Jean-Paul Desbiens) declared that the commonly spoken Canadian French was in fact a "décomposition" of language (Turenne, 1962). He used the term "joual" to refer to the distinctive working class French language of Quebec.

Proponents of "standard" French inveigh against the use of Canadianisms represented by "joual". The preface of Turenne's Petit Dictionnaire du Joual au Français, for example, exhorts the reader that "Of course you can speak French better! It's so easy... After for so long ridiculing those who spoke well, why should you not laugh in the future at those who speak 'joual'?" He goes on to observe that "the French Canadian is his own worst enemy when it comes to language. Even if he knows French fairly well, he is afraid to speak it and especially to speak it well. He fears being ridiculed by his fellow countrymen."

Despite the efforts of Turenne and others who work towards what they term the "re-Frenchization" of Quebec's language, an opposing group has adopted the "joual" as an honorable badge of separatist ethnicity and national identity. Woolfson observed that militant Quebecois students at Laval University refuse to speak anything else (Woolfson, 1979, p. 211).

Regardless of the disputed linguistic merits of French-Canadian speech, it is important to recognize the importance that this language variety plays in the cultural identity of the Franco-American student. Dubé (1971) points out the

need for acceptance of the young Franco's dialect in order to legitimate his/her self-concept during the early years of schooling. Since this is the only French the student has ever heard, and it is the dialect spoken at home and in the community by both family and friends, it merits an important place in the student's sense of identity and values, and consequently in the school's acceptance of that child as an individual. The deleterious effects of ignoring or disparaging the Franco student's native language during the early years of schooling will be examined in the following section of this paper.

B. Franco-American Dialect

It is important for educators to understand the distinctive differences between Franco-American and "standard" French. Woolfson provides a concise summary:

> On the phonological level, there is dipthongization of vowels - /per/ to /peyr/ 'father': some short tense vowels have become lax /rit/ to /rɪt/: short /a/ in final position has become /ɔ/ 'open o' as in /kănɔdɔ/ 'Canada': /t/ and /d/ are often affricated to /ts/ or /dz/ before a high front vowel as in /ptsit/ 'petite'. There are often considerable changes in grammar and syntax. One of the most noticeable is the appearance of English structures and words which are used so extensively in the language that it is sometimes called 'franglais'. (Tables 10 and 11). The Quebec government has become so concerned about the amount of English used in ordinary French conversations that it has published a series of pamphlets giving the standard French words for use in carpentry, plumbing, mechanics and sports like bowling. (1971, p. 212)

Dubé summarizes the typical words anglicized by a Franco student into three categories:

> 1) common nouns and adjectives which he hears and understands but to which he is exposed mostly in an English context: truck, lucky, cheap, coat, store;
> 2) seldom used words, such as typewriter (dactylo) and lawnmower (tondeuse) which he only hears and reads in English;
> 3) English verbs, which he neglects to assimilate in French, but to which he adds the French conjugation: runner, fighter and rider. (1971, p. 197)

A second important factor for an educator to keep in mind is the effect on the English language acquisition of a student growing up in a predominantly

Franco milieu. Although English itself has many recognized different forms and dialects, Franco English may not conform to any particular one of these.

Franco students in American schools may be at any point on both the French- and English-language competency continuum. One of the major difficulties facing educators in assessing Franco language acquisition is the lack of any valid French-language diagnostic measures. Standardized tests developed for use overseas for "standard" mainland French speakers are clearly inappropriate for use with this linguistic and cultural group. Standardized tests developed in Quebec are meant for fluent native speakers, while most Franco students have grown up with a restricted range of both French and English speech patterns. This problem remains to be solved.

III. EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

A. The Parochial Schools

Mindful of their religious heritage and obligations, the Franco-Americans supported the establishment of Catholic parochial schools, in which the language of instruction was generally French. The parochial school system was widespread by the early 1900s. By the end of World War II, however, the parochial schools had experienced the same difficulties as other Franco institutions encountered as the Francos assimilated or moved away into suburbia.

The system of Franco parochial schools lasted until approximately 1960, when, in response to a number of external and largely economic factors, the formerly French parishes denationalized and the parochial schools began to close one by one.[1] Franco parents had little choice but to send their children to the public schools in their communities. The public educational system, however, made little effort to accommodate these French-background students' cultural and linguistic differences during the initial transition period of approximately 1960-1970.

B. Early Experiences with Public Education, 1960-1970

Franco children enrolling in public elementary schools in New England were forced into a different environment from what they had encountered in the parochial schools. In public school, being bilingual was a disadvantage, something which was considered a handicap rather than an advantage. Being Franco was equivalent to being labeled and treated as a member of an inherently intellectually inferior population. Ethnic jokes about "dumb Frogs" were common, and the scars from this treatment evidently were left on the children well into their later lives. A typical letter to the editor written by a former Franco public school student, now an adult, reiterates this negative legacy:

> Reflet et Lumière's [A Maine locally-produced TV show] first segment staggered me. The implication of a 'dumb Frenchman' joke wasn't funny. We don't need to be reminded of our stupidity. We need to be encouraged to appreciate our culture and guard it jealously. Why don't they encourage our youth to return to the land of their ancestors [Canada] instead of portraying us like idiots?[2]

Kloss details in his book The American Bilingual Tradition the linguistic treatment accorded to the French-speaking children when they entered the public schools of Maine, a situation which was repeated all over New England:

> ...As far as I can see, French was never permitted as a tool of instruction or even as a subject in the public schools of the area of French settlement...Gradually the French language was completely banned from the school grounds in the St. John Valley. This was pushed to such an extreme that both students and teachers were forbidden to use French even during recess, creating problems of morale in the process. Teachers have admitted that the children would revert to French when under the influence of a strong emotion. (1979, p. 171)

The Franco-American students continued to have language difficulties even in secondary-school French-language classes. A Franco-American student describes his problems:

> After the completion of grammar school, we entered junior high. While there, we were offered a French course. We thought that by

> taking such a course we were sure to get an A for a grade. But what we didn't expect is that during the first few weeks of class, the instructor kept telling us that the French we spoke was wrong. He told us that the way we pronounced certain French words was incorrect, and out of context, when all we were doing was speaking the language that had been spoken in the St. John Valley for over 150 years. As a result, kids who never spoke or understood French were getting A's, and the kids who had been speaking French all of their lives were getting B's, C's or even D's!
>
> When I got to high school, I just took the minimum requirement of 2 years of French. Being in a rebellious stage of life, I just didn't want any more hassles from teachers telling me that the French I spoke was wrong.3

The above situation may seem like a curious irony to the reader. How is it that a language which is generally held in high esteem in educational circles and which represents a gastronomical and fashionable "haute couture" can be so denigrated? The answer goes back to the origins of this language. As has been discussed, French-Canadian speech, especially as modulated by years of contact with American English, is a far different phenomenon from the upper-class "standard" Parisian speech from mainland France so sought after by generations of American students of French as a foreign language. Franco students, who would normally be expected to excel in French language classes, thus found themselves instead ridiculed by and failing at the hands of traditionally-trained American foreign language teachers. The following experience is perhaps tragically typical :

> I began college in a small college in a Franco-American community. I studied writing, sociology, math, literature and with all that, I even took a French course. The French professor had studied in one of the most reputable French universities. He was very intelligent - he could pronounce beautifully every French word. That's what he tried to teach me. But I didn't want to change my pronunciation, I didn't want to alienate myself from my family and from my friends. I've been speaking my own French for 18 years and I won't change! The teacher told me that I spoke poorly in French, and that I would be better off to forget it. OK! I quit French class, I quit the college and I enrolled at the University, where there weren't many Franco-Americans. There, at least, no one would hear me talk, and there I was successful.4

The cumulative result of the many years of this type of educational treatment, as documented in an application for federal funding under the Bilingual Education Act (ESEA Title VII)[5] was such that Franco children entering school in the 1970s in northern Vermont exhibited the following typical behavior and achievement patterns:

1) Franco children, upon entering school, showed no differences from their Anglo peers in psychomotor skill development. Franco children were, however, more shy and retiring, and less verbal than their Anglo peers.

2) Franco children experienced a cumulative achievement deficit as they progressed through the grades. Franco children were typically behind grade level by the third grade, and by eighth grade were far outdistanced by their Anglo peers.

3) Franco students tended to be "tracked" in high school into the lower vocationally-oriented tracks. Few Franco students appeared in the college preparatory groups.

This situation, along with various state laws prohibiting the use of a foreign language while teaching in public elementary and secondary schools (other than in foreign language courses themselves) persisted until the passage of Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1967.

C. The Franco-American Experience with Title VII Bilingual Education

Franco-American community leaders as well as educators and parents were major groups particularly concerned with Franco children's difficulties in public school over the past 15 years. The community leaders, generally older males, were primarily interested in "la survivance de la langue française", or survival of the French language, which was rapidly disappearing.

Parents and educators were more concerned with turning what had been perceived as a French-background handicap into a positive, bilingual advantage. When federal monies became available during the late 1960s, the first Franco bilingual education project was funded in Greenville, New Hampshire.

Along with this project, a liaison project known as the "Service de Liaison des Projets Bilingues Français-Anglais" was established to coordinate efforts between the New England program and similar French bilingual efforts occurring concurrently in Louisiana. Lacking any appropriate curriculum and instructional materials, the Greenville program began to develop its own bilingual materials, which were subsequently disseminated by the Service de Liaison.

The second such project, and the most successful in that it went on to approval by the Joint Dissemination Review Panel in Washington, D.C., as part of the National Diffusion Network of model innovative educational programs, was begun in the St. John Valley in northernmost Maine in 1970. Because Maine at that time had a state law prohibiting the use of French as a language of instruction in the schools, the project had to obtain a waiver on "experimental" grounds (Kloss, p. 171). The large St. John Valley project also did extensive curriculum development work,[5] a labor which would later result in the adoption of the St. John Valley curriculum by other new French bilingual education programs.

These earliest programs did not gain wide publicity within the Franco community at large. The Greenville project, being the first of its kind, was occupied with breaking new ground. The St. John Valley program was essentially an Acadian-focused effort located in perhaps the remotest possible geographical area of northern New England. The greater significance of these developments did not go totally unheeded, however, due in large measure to the dissemination efforts of the Service de Liaison.

Encouraged by the success of the Greenville and the St. John Valley bilingual education programs, Franco community educators and leaders began to focus on applying for federal funding for other bilingual education programs in areas which had a high concentration of Franco pupils (since eligibility under the federal rules and regulations then in effect was tied to percentages of eligible

pupils of a given ethnic/linguistic population in the applicant's local school district). Although there was often a genuine concern for the educational well-being of Franco students, the primary motivation behind many of these applications tended to be based on ethnic/linguistic maintenance from the Franco viewpoint, and on the prospect of increased federal dollars into the local school district from the largely Anglo administration viewpoint.

The following years saw the funding of new programs in Caribou, Maine; Derby, Vermont; and Lewiston, Maine. By 1973, however, both the Derby and the Lewiston programs were in political difficulties, and by the close of the 1974 school year, both programs had ceased operations. By this time also the pioneer Greenville program had also closed down, although some of its staff lent its expertise as consultants to other programs.

After the new round of federal funding competition in 1974, two new projects joined the two continuing French bilingual education programs (i.e., the St. John Valley and Caribou, Maine): Berlin, New Hampshire and Canaan-Norton, Vermont. Both projects initially consulted the St. John Valley curriculum model but quickly developed their own modified grade by grade curriculum guides and supplementary materials.

By this point in time, the Franco community was becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of emulating the efforts of other ethnic groups who had obtained extensive educational and social benefits from federal programs. The Francos seemed on the verge of a renaissance, and in fact educators spoke in terms of a cultural and linguistic renaissance based on and fueled by federal funding provided for school-based bilingual education programs.

The next new local French Title VII bilingual education program was funded after the 1977 competition. This project, located in northernmost Vermont on the Canadian border in the Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union (Richford, Vermont), was one of four such projects funded that year to implement the model

St. John Valley program approved for general nationwide adoption by the Joint Dissemination Review Panel in Washington in 1976.[7] (The other three sites were in Louisiana.)

The years 1975-1979 were the zenith of French federally-supported bilingual education in New England. There were two local projects in Vermont, one in New Hampshire, and two in Maine; several national curriculum development and resource/training centers concerned in some way with Francos; and a newly organized Franco student group at the University of Maine at Orono (named "FAROG", the old ethnic reference serving as an acronym for the "Franco-American Resource and Opportunity Group"). A crowning achievement in 1978 was the funding of a Franco-American bilingual teacher training program at the University of Vermont. This program sent student teachers to intern in the Franklin Northeast, Canaan, and Berlin bilingual education programs from 1979-81.

By the end of 1979, however, several projects were reaching the end of their allowable periods of federal funding while others were facing increasing criticism from several different sides. Both the Berlin and Canaan projects were ineligible for further federal funding, after an extended period of six previous years. There was popular support but insufficient funds to provide for extensive continuation. The Caribou project had declined to file a federal application for the continuation of its program and shut itself down in 1978. The St. John Valley had a grant for its dissemination efforts following its approval for nationwide adoption by the Joint Dissemination Review Panel; the major school-based instructional program was de-funded, however, after its 10-year history. By the 1980-81 school year, the Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union program was left as the only local program still in formal ESEA Title VII operation.

One new project, however, was funded in 1981 in the Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union, Swanton, Vermont. At the present time (1983), this program

remains as the only ongoing local Title VII French bilingual education program in New England.

To complete the tally of the Title VII projects, the University of Vermont's Franco teacher training program also ceased operation at the close of the 1981-82 school year.

One might readily understand the role played in the demise of the French Title VII bilingual programs by the vagaries of federal funding and by local politics, but wonder at Franco opposition. Even those projects which continued full term faced heavy criticisms at times: Berlin and Richford are examples of this process. Franco objections and criticisms centered around five main issues:

1) Language variety. Franco parents were fearful that "standard" French would be imposed on their children.

2) Course content and teaching methodology. Franco parents objected to the potential or actual use of methodology which differed from the norm (the introduction of extremely humanistically oriented teachers and methods in the Lewiston program in particular resulted in its early demise). They were also fearful that the children would fall even further behind if extraneous content were introduced.

3) Language interference. Franco parents wanted their children to learn English so that they could better themselves in life. They feared that two languages would only serve to confuse children and hinder their progress.

4) Assimilation. Many Franco parents and children did not wish to be publicly identified as being French (in fact, New England abounds with anglicized French names: LeBlanc to White, La Riviere to Rivers, Boisvert to Greenwood, etc.). Some feared renewed hostility on the part of Anglos.

5) Disbelief in the efficacy of bilingual education. Franco parents had only seen being bilingual as a disadvantage and could not understand the theory behind how knowing two languages could help their children do better in school.

A related problem has been the historic reluctance of the Franco population to organize politically or to make any waves. Even when faced with the potential loss of a program which they strongly supported and wished to have continued,

many Franco parents did not publicly fight for the program at school board meetings (largely headed by Anglos).

A further related cultural factor was the lack of ethnic solidarity within the group itself. Distrustful of outsiders, yet forced to accept their help because of the lack of trained Franco instructional personnel to staff bilingual programs, the Francos tended to remain separated into local groups. A Franco who dared to rise above the general educational or economic level of the rest of the community was apt to risk severe social sanctions. Even directors of French bilingual programs were often targets of attack precisely because they were Francos in a position of authority. This factor helped keep the Francos from developing and encouraging local leaders capable of and willing to publicly stand up and champion not only bilingual education, but Franco interests as a whole.

D. Higher Education

Nor have Franco students fared particularly well in the area of higher education. Historically, the Franco males tended to enter the seminary (often attached to the parochial school system) for education beyond the high school level. Females tended not to continue on to higher education, although they often attained higher levels of grammar school education than did their male siblings (males often left school at an early age to work on the family farm or contribute their salaries from the mill to the maintenance of the family unit).

For those students who have in the past few decades begun to expand the Franco presence in New England's secular colleges and universities, the reception has not always been accepting and supportive.

Certain institutions, however, began special programs to take advantage of as well as to serve the Franco bilingual populations in their student bodies. The University of Maine at Orono (UMO), for example, hosts several Franco-American

student organizations (including the Franco-American Resource and Opportunity Group, publishers of the newspaper Le F.A.R.O.G. Forum, which enjoys a circulation far beyond the campus itself). As the President of UMO observes,

> The University of Maine at Orono, as the major University within Maine, has beyond any doubt whatsoever, a responsibility to the Franco-American population. This responsibility encompasses not only the traditional aspects of any University, such as educational opportunity, research studies and off-campus public service, but it also includes a need to understand and explain the cultural and economic contributions of Franco-Americans in making us what we are today. I have a sincere and deep appreciation for the French heritage and French culture within Maine. I feel the need for developing even greater personal understanding and greater citizen's appreciation.[8]

Other universities have also hosted Franco-American special programs, institutes, and conferences (for example, the Boston University Bilingual Resource and Training Center, the Boston State College Bilingual Teacher training program, the University of Vermont Franco-American teacher training program, and the Title IX Ethnic Heritage program at Assumption College, to mention but a few). These programs are still relatively limited, however, compared to the numbers of Franco-American students on campus.

IV. THE QUESTION OF "SURVIVANCE"

A. Unresolved Problems

The predominant question facing the Franco-Americans today is that of cultural and linguistic survival. This question is complicated by several factors:

a) Franco reliance on the past. The Franco-Americans' cultural identity is firmly rooted in their past history. This feeling is evidenced in titles of many Franco literary works, conferences, and articles (e.g., "Colloquium 1976--Franco-Americans: The Promise of the Past, the Realities of the Present";[9] "Notre Passe, C'est Notre Avenir" (Our Past is Our Future): Tomorrow's Franco-American Today. Second National Franco-American Conference, 1979"). This constant looking backwards and fear of repeat discrimination has tended to keep

them out of the mainstream of taking an active role in their children's educational futures, and reluctant to organize politically. From this perspective, the lack of vocal and political grass roots support for the maintenance and spread of French bilingual education in New England becomes more understandable. Though they may privately have complained vociferously, their collective voice was never raised or heard in Washington, D.C., where political decisions related to funding for educational and social programs were being made each year.

One Franco-American writer expressed the problem as follows:

> In the past ten years, Franco-Americans have taken a number of steps towards the revitalization of their ethnic reality. On paper, these accomplishments are impressive. There has been a proliferation of meetings, des congrès et des colloques. Federal funding has made possible a number of high quality programs aimed at linguistic and cultural maintenance. Our visibility and influence has increased by the enhanced use of mass media and by the formation of coordinating organizations. All of these efforts cry out 'New! Alive! Dynamic!'
>
> Yet whenever I hear these adjectives, I also discern a discordant, contrapuntal chorus somewhere in the distance softly repeating the words 'old, camouflaged, recycled.'
>
> ...We were concerned with the present...or more specifically, how to adapt a reality mired in the past to the exigencies of an uncompromising present. We were concerned with survival pure and simple. Effecting a workable compromise between the then and now was an urgent priority. So we remodeled, adapted, modernized. We painted, papered, patched. The time needed to check the soundness of the basic structure and of its many component parts seemed a luxury we couldn't afford... We opted for the cosmetic rather than the comprehensive approach to revitalization.[10]

b. Disagreement among Francos. Disagreements are evident within the Franco population with respect to several philosophical areas. The first of these concerns the French language. There are those who have made the parental decision not to raise bilingual children as well as those who insist on the primacy and importance of retaining and inculcating French within the family unit. Even among those staunchly supporting the maintenance of French, there

are disagreements over the type of language to be taught: Franco-American dialect or "standard" language.

A second area of disagreement concerns whether or not the Francos have been, are presently, or will be classified as a "disadvantaged" group. Such a classification entails increased eligibility for federal and state social assistance programs; however, the Francos are a proud and self-reliant group, and often resist otherwise well-intentioned efforts to add their names to public assistance programs.

A third area of disagreement among Francos is the attitude towards those Francos who do rise in status. There is an unfortunate tendency among Francos to resent or even attack those who advance above the general attainment level of the peer group. Some Franco writers have brought this issue out in the open:

> Activist Francos are impatient with what they consider the older generation's acceptance of second class citizenship. 'We are our own worst enemies; when someone starts to rise above the others we pull him down', says Dr. Michael Dupré, chairman of the sociology department of St. Anselm's College near Manchester, New Hampshire.[11]

c) Lack of political impact. Although the Francos have made certain political gains in terms of elected and/or appointed government officials (witness Josaphat T. Benoit, a former mayor of Manchester, NH; Norman D'Amours, U.S. Representative; Robert Coutourier, a former mayor of Lewiston, ME) they lack a coherent sense of political unity which could make them into an ethnic voting bloc.

Striving to unite for political action, several Franco groups have begun in the last few years to organize. Typically, however, there are different groups all competing for membership and attention (e.g., the Assemblée des Franco-Américains, the Conseil Franco-Américain de New Hampshire, the American-Canadian Genealogical Society, and Action pour les Franco-Américains/Action for

Franco-Americans, to name but a few). Most of these groups hold an annual meeting or convention and adopt political platforms (e.g., "A Political Agenda for Franco-Americans" published in Le FAROG Forum),[12] but they lack the resources and clout to get their platforms implemented.

An activist Franco student group formed at the University of Maine, Orono (FAROG) has sponsored the mass-circulation newspaper Le FAROG Forum, Project F.A.R.I.N.E. (see References), and a host of political activities focusing on trying to improve the social plight of disadvantaged Franco-Americans (for example, putting pressure on the Maine mental health agencies to provide bilingual services to patients in their facilities). This appears to be the only such cohesively-organized Franco college group in New England.

B. Franco Strengths

Despite the many external and internal pressures on them, the Francos have managed to survive to the present time as a recognizable ethnic group. As Quintal eloquently expresses the point:

> ...Franco-Americans, in point of fact, were leading very ordinary lives. Lives bounded by home, parish and factory. But lives ennobled by religion, enhanced by love of family, embellished through ongoing contact with the culture of Canada via a language piously preserved.
>
> ...However, their pride in being bilingual was always undermined by the knowledge that those around them viewed their culture as a decadent, sub-standard version of the prestigious civilization of France, that is if society identified Francos with France at all. For the most part, Franco-Americans are still seen today only as the direct descendants of poor, uncultured, Canadian farmers who came to this country to eke out a marginal living in the industrial centers of New England... And so, being bilingual became a badge of poverty and separation, not one of enrichment or strength, since the dominant social group did not recognize or acknowledge it as a positive force, indeed exercized pressure to eradicate it as quickly as possible. To be recognized as a true American, meant abandoning one's truest, deepest self as expressed in a language alien to the society in which one lived. And yet Franco-Americans persisted in their language maintenance efforts and there is a kind of 'noblesse' in having done so.

> What lies ahead for the Franco-American? In his heart of hearts, the Franco is still the 'habitant' of yore. He has survived as a placid person and happy family man. Along with other ethnic groups in this country, he has earned the right to have the nation at large recognize and respect his contribution to the industrial expansion of this nation. The Franco will very likely remain true to himself and to the traditional characteristics of his race, but being more educated, he/she can aspire to recognition in all of the fields of human endeavor. Still, at a time when this nation is returning to a simpler way of life, when rural values are more and more respected, it may well be that the Franco-American will not have to leave his old self behind, should, in fact, not dream of doing so. His native endurance and perseverance, to which are being added greater self-assurance, will very likely be his best means of ensuring quiet recognition for his ethnic group in these last decades of the century, more than one hundred years since he first arrived in New England, and nearly four hundred years since he first settled this continent. (p. 386-7)

V. CONCLUSION

It is still difficult to predict the ultimate outcome to the question of "survivance." While the available data look rather discouraging, this is not the first period of history in which the Francos have been in a precarious position, or in which the Francos have persisted in intergroup disagreements and opposing viewpoints.

In conclusion of this examination of the Franco-American social context, Perreault offers a concise summation and an assessment for the future:

> ...Several decades ago, adults accused the younger generation of falling prey to the propaganda of assimilation. Hopefully, the younger generation of today will make up for this loss by recapturing the past and making it useful in the present. If parents take a greater interest in the ethnic formation of their children, and if the bilingual programs of today's educators can receive full support of the government and the people, the future of all languages, including French, will remain bright.
>
> There are some who might feel that by speaking a foreign language and by identifying with one's ethnic heritage a person is being un-American and unpatriotic. On the contrary, the United States is a nation which advocates the freedom to be what one wishes to be. A person may owe allegiance to the United States and be proud of his or

her ethnic heritage at the same time. If the Franco-Americans become successful in regaining the French language and in maintaining it in their homes, they will be all the more wealthy, both intellectually and culturally. If, on the other hand, the Franco-Americans one day disappear, it is because they will have wanted it. (p. 45-6)

Table 1

Percent French Mother Tongue Population

Area	Total Population	French Mother Tongue	% French Mother Tongue
Maine	993,663	141,489	14.2
New Hampshire	737,681	112,278	15.2
Vermont	444,330	42,193	9.5
Massachusetts	5,688,903	367,194	6.4
Rhode Island	948,844	101,270	10.7
Connecticut	3,031,705	142,118	4.7
United States	203,210,158	2,598,408	1.3

SOURCE: 1970 U.S. Census

Table 2

Franco-American Concentrations in New England

Area	Cities and Towns
Berkshire County, Massachusetts	Adams, North Adams, and Pittsfield
The Blackstone Valley	Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, Marlborough, Spencer, and Worcester, Mass.; Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, Warren, West Warwick, and Woonsocket, R.I.
The Boston Area	Cambridge, Lynn, and Salem, Mass.
Central Massachusetts	Chicopee, Holyoke, Northampton, Palmer, Springfield, and Ware
Central New Hampshire	Berlin
Central Southwestern Connecticut	Hartford and Waterbury
The Merrimack Valley	Haverhill, Lawrence, and Lowell, Mass.; Manchester and Nashua, N.H.
The Quinebaug Valley	Danielson, Jewitt City, Plainfield, Putnam, Taftville, and Willimantic, Conn.; Southbridge and Webster, Mass.
Southwestern Maine	Biddeford-Saco, Brunswick, Lewiston-Auburn, Old Town, and Waterville; Somersworth, N.H.
Southwestern Massachusetts	Brockton, Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton
Western Vermont	Burlington, St. Albans, and Winooski

SOURCE: Northeast Conference, 1976

Table 3

Towns and Places of 10,000 or More in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont by Rank Order of Size of French Mother Tongue Population

Rank	Place, State	French Population	Percent French
1	Manchester, NH	27,777	31.7
2	Lewiston, ME	25,037	59.9
3	Nashua, NH	15,289	27.4
4	Biddeford, ME	12,268	61.4
5	Berlin, NH	9,224	60.5
6	Auburn, ME	6,938	28.7
7	Augusta, ME	6,419	29.3
8	Sanford Town, ME	5,997	38.1
9	Waterville, ME	5,456	30.0
10	Rochester, NH	3,810	21.2
11	Saco, ME	3,331	28.5
12	Laconia, NH	3,173	21.3
13	Caribou, ME	2,470	23.7

Table 4

Counties in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont with 5,000 or More French Mother Tongue Persons by Rank Order of Size of French Mother Tongue Population

Rank	Place, State	French Population	Percent French
1	Hillsborough, NH	53,470	23.9
2	Androscoggin, ME	35,940	39.4
3	Aroostook, ME	27,442	29.2
4	York, ME	26,226	23.5
5	Kennebec, ME	18,264	19.2
6	Chittendon, VT	12,735	12.8
7	Coos, NH	12,610	36.8
8	Strafford, NH	11,857	16.8
9	Cumberland, ME	11,286	5.9
10	Rockingham, NH	9,434	6.8
11	Merrimack, NH	9,411	11.6
12	Penobscot, ME	8,885	7.1
13	Franklin, VT	5,515	17.6
14	Orleans, VT	4,997	4.6

Table 5

Maine Cities, Towns, and Plantations With 1,000 or More French Mother Tongue Persons

	Total Population	Fr. Mo. Tongue	% Fr. Mo. Tongue
Lewiston	41,779	25,037	59.9
Biddeford	19,983	12,268	61.4
Auburn	24,151	6,938	28.7
Augusta	21,945	6,419	29.3
Sanford Town	15,722	5,997	38.1
Waterville	18,192	5,456	30.0
Madawaska Town	5,622	4,997	89.1
Fort Kent Town	4,587	3,929	85.9
Van Buren Town	4,102	3,844	93.9
Saco	11,678	3,331	28.5
Winslow	7,299	2,882	39.5
Portland	65,116	2,747	4.2
Brunswick Town	16,195	2,488	15.4
Westbrook	14,444	2,487	17.2
Caribou	10,419	2,470	23.7
Rumford Town	9,363	1,993	21.3
Bangor	33,168	1,861	5.6
Presque Isle	11,452	1,576	13.8
Old Town City	9,057	1,763	19.5
Frenchville	1,487	1,441	96.9
Millinocket Town	7,544	993	12.8
Old Orchard Beach	5,404	977	18.1

SOURCE: Madeleine Giguère, Social and Economic Profile French Mother Tongue Persons: 1970.

Table 6

N.H. Towns With Largest French Mother Tongue Population (FMT)-1970 Census

	Town	Total Population	No. FMT	% FMT	% of St. FMT
1.	Manchester	87,754	27,777	31.65	24.67
2.	Nashua	55,820	15,289	27.39	13.58
3.	Berlin	15,256	9,224	60.46	8.19
4.	Rochester	17,938	3,810	21.24	3.38
5.	Somersworth	9,026	3,536	39.17	3.14
6.	Laconia	14,888	3,173	21.31	2.81
7.	Dover	21,046	2,937	13.96	2.60
8.	Concord	30,022	2,740	9.13	2.43
9.	Claremont	14,221	2,465	17.33	2.18
10.	Goffstown	9,284	2,313	24.91	2.05
11.	Salem	20,142	2,087	10.36	1.85
12.	Hudson	10,771	1,990	18.48	1.76
13.	Allenstown	2,732	1,463	53.55	1.29
14.	Bedford	5,859	1,418	24.20	1.25
15.	Franklin	7,292	1,416	19.42	1.25
16.	Keene	20,467	1,199	5.86	1.06
17.	Hooksett	5,564	1,190	21.39	1.05
18.	Pembroke	4,261	1,170	27.46	1.03
19.	Portsmouth	26,188	1,158	4.42	1.02
20.	Gorham	2,987	1,046	35.02	0.92
21.	Derry	11,712	1,045	8.92	0.92
22.	Lebanon	9,725	962	9.89	0.85

Notes

1. Source: Andrew T. Stewart, Percent French Mother Tongue: New Hampshire Places, Towns, and Cities. Concord Office of Equal Educational Opportunity, N.H. Department of Education, 1976

2. The 22 towns listed above contain 79.28% of the N.H. French Mother Tongue Population

Table 7

Places With 1,000 or More French Mother Tongue Persons: Towns and Places of 10,000-50,000 Vermont, 1970

	Total Population	Fr. Mo. Tongue	% Fr. Mo. Tongue
Barre	10,209	1,608	15.8
Burlington	38.633	4,622	12.0
Essex	10,951	1,140	10.4
Rutland	19,293	1,025	5.3
South Burlington	10,032	1,136	11.3

SOURCE: Madeleine Giguère, Number and Percent of Persons with French Mother Tongue

Table 8

Selected Laws and Regulations of Interest to the
Tri-State Bicultural-Bilingual Populations

Law or Regulation	Focus	Eligibility Label	Relevant 1980 Census Data
I. FEDERAL			
A. Title VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964	Discrimination in Employment	National Origin	Ancestry
B. Bilingual Education-Interim Final Regulations (1979)	Target population for bilingual education programs	Limited English proficiency, the traditionally underserved	
C. Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Acts of 1965: Emergency School Aid (1978)	Educational segregation and discrimination	Franco-American Current Language	Ancestry
II. STATE			
A. Maine Human Rights Act (1971)	Discrimination in employment, housing, and access to public accommodations	Ancestry or national origin	Ancestry

Table 9

Current Language and Ancestry Questions
1980 U.S. Census of Population, Long Form

13. a. Does this person speak a language other than English at home:
( )Yes ( )No, only speaks English

If yes,
b. What is this language?

(for example, Chinese, Italian, Spanish, etc.)

c. How well does this person speak English?
( ) Very well
( ) Well
( ) Not well
( ) Not at all

14. What is this person's ancestry?
(If uncertain about how to report ancestry, see instruction guide.)

(For example--Afro-Amer., English, French, German, Honduran, Hungarian, Italian, Jamaican, Korean, Lebanese, Mexican, Nigerian, Polish, Ukrainian, Venezuelan, etc.)

Madeleine Giguère, 6-8-79

NOTES

1) For a description of this process, see Chassé, Paul P. Education/l'Education. Worcester, MA: Assumption College, 1975 (Franco-American Ethnic Heritage Studies Program, ESEA Title IX).

2) Letter from Candide Desrosiers to Le FAROG Forum 9(3), Nov. 1981, p. 14.

3) Rossignol, Mark. "To be or not to be...French." Le FAROG Forum 8(4), Dec. 1980, p. 7.

4) Paradis, Françoise. "Commentaire." In Les Franco-Américains: la promesse du passé, les réalités du présent. Colloque, 1976. Bedford, NH: National Materials Development Center for French and Portuguese, p. 77.

5) Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union. Application for Funding under ESEA Title VII, 1977-1978. Richford, VT.

6) See (Jacobson) Hagel, P. "An Annotated bibliography of Title VII French project-developed instructional materials, 1970-1975." Bedford, NH: National Materials Development Center for French and Portuguese, 1976.

7) See Project VIBE. "Savoir - A nationally validated bilingual/bicultural K-4 program. The St. John Valley Bilingual Education Program." Madawaska, ME, n.d.

8) Libby, Winthrop C. Letter to Le FAROG Forum 6(1), Oct. 1978, p. 24.

9) National Materials Development Center for French and Portuguese. Colloque 1976 - Les Franco-Américains: La promesse du passé, les réalités du présent. Bedford, NH, 1976.

10) Chabot, Grégoire. "Plume en Bec: En Panne." Le FAROG Forum 9(3), Nov. 1981, p. 13.

11) Guy, Don. "New England's Franco-Americans: Vive la Différence?" Yankee, July 1976, p. 71.

12) Landry, Walter J. "A political agenda for Franco-Americans." Le FAROG Forum 8(1), Sept. 1981, p. 2.

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